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On October 3, Vice-Chancellor and Economics Minister Ehard will leave for India, Burma, Thailand, Japan, South Korea, South Vietnam, Ceylon and Pakistan. He will be accompanied by some 30 persons, including seven Bundestag delegates of both the government coalition and the opposition parties, probably Stoltenberg, Vogel and Niederaalt of the CDU, Deist and Karlbaum of the SPD, Lens of the FDP and Schneider of the DP, as well as one member each of the Finance Ministry and of the Central Bank, i.e., Kerff and Outh. The remainder of the group will be composed of a number of officials of the Economics Ministry, five journalists and several administrative aides and assistants.

This 5-week trip, which coincides with the October 6-10 annual meeting of the IMF and the World Bank in New Delhi, follows widespread discussion in West German Government and private circles of the need for intensified aid to developing countries. In fact, there have been press reports that the so-called "Economic Cabinet" has agreed on a comprehensive aid program, that this program is currently being discussed by the full Cabinet and that it may be published just prior to the Minister's departure. However, so far there has been no official confirmation of these reports. The Economics Ministry's press release on the subject of September 23 merely stresses the Minister's intention to obtain a better view of what is needed by perusal observation and contacts, points out that economic progress in the developing countries simultaneously represents an important barrier against cyclical downturns in the aiding countries, and emphasizes that the FedRep has traditionally maintained good relations with such countries which have not been jeopardized by any political ambitions.

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